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Research Report

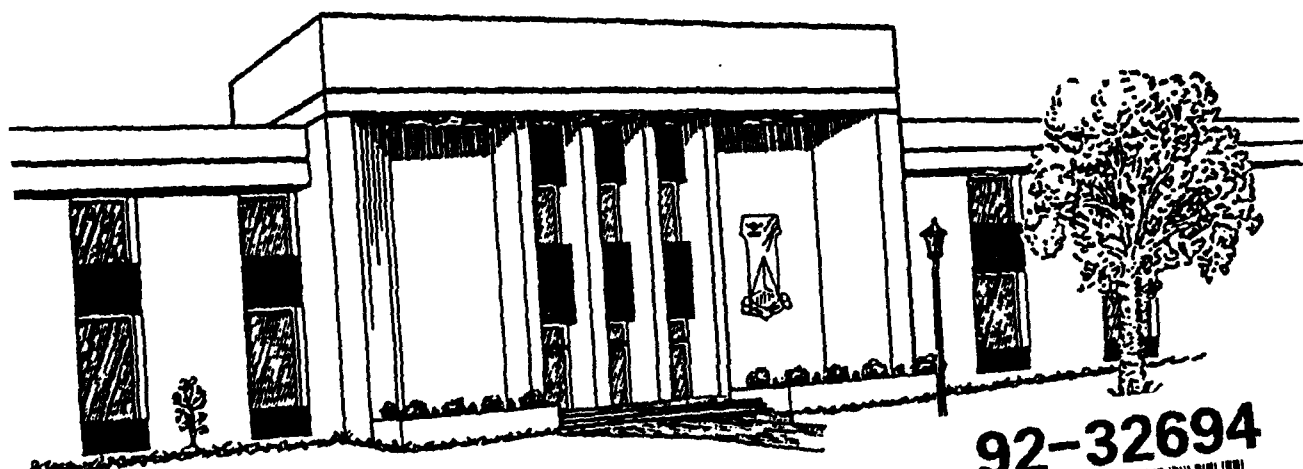
REGIONAL STRATEGIC ESTIMATE

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REGIONAL STRATEGIC ESTIMATE

by

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A REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Dr. Steve Metz

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

April 1991

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CENTRAL AMERICAN STRATEGIC ESTIMATE

1. Strategic Direction.

a. Major Components of National Security Strategy.

(1) Global Components. There are four basic interests and objectives to our National Security Strategy:

(a) The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure. (1:3)

(b) A growing and healthy United States economy to ensure opportunity for individual prosperity and resources for national endeavors at home and abroad. (1:3)

(c) Healthy, cooperative, and politically vigorous relations with allies and friendly nations. (1:3)

(d) A stable and secure world, where political and economic freedom, human rights, and democratic institutions flourish. (1:4)

(2) Regional Components. There are five regional interests to support our national strategy.

(a) The continued fostering of the principal of common destiny and mutual responsibility. (1:8)

(b) A completely democratic hemisphere including Central America. (1:8)

(c) Regional stability and peace through negotiation, demilitarization, and demobilization. (1:8)

(d) Hemispheric prosperity achieved through expanded free trade, increased investment, and reduced debt burdens. (1:8)

(e) Eradication of illegal narco-trafficking.(1:8)

b. Major Components of national Military Strategy.

(1) Global Components.

(a) Strategic Deterrence and Defense.

Maintenance of a modern, fully capable, and reliable strategic deterrent remains the number one defense priority of the United States. (2:7)

(b) Forward Presence. Forward presence

demonstrates our commitment, lends credibility to our alliances, enhances regional stability, and provides a crisis-response capability while promoting US influence and access. (2:7)

(c) Crisis Response Through Force Projection. US

forces must be able to respond rapidly to deter and, if necessary, to fight unilaterally or as part of a combined effort. (2:7)

(d) Reconstitution. We must preserve a credible

capability to forestall any potential adversary from competing militarily with the United States. We do this by maintaining our ability to form, train, and field new fighting units. (2:7)

(e) Readiness. Deterrence and crisis response

dictate that we maintain a force which can respond quickly and be prepared to fight upon arrival. (2:8)

(f) Collective Security. While support of formal

alliances such as NATO will continue to be fundamental to American military strategy, the United States must be prepared to fight as part of an ad hoc coalition if we become involved in conflict where no formal security relationships exist. We must also retain the capability to operate independently, as our

interests dictate.

(g) Arms Control. We are in a new era in arms control. The United States will continue to seek to reduce military threats to our national interests and channel force postures in more stabilizing directions. (2:9)

(h) Technological Superiority. The United States must continue to rely on technological superiority to offset quantitative disadvantages and gain swift, decisive termination of any conflict. (2:10)

(i) Decisive Force. The United States will continue to apply decisive force to quickly overwhelm our adversaries and thereby terminate conflicts swiftly with a minimum loss of life. (2:10)

(j) Maritime and Aerospace Superiority. Maritime and aerospace superiority are critical if we are to continue to pursue a strategy that entails the projection of power. The ability to deliver decisive action coupled with control of critical lines of communication is vital to the strategy. (2:9)

(2) Regional Components.

(a) Regional Concerns. Regional concerns include narco-trafficking, insurgencies which threaten peace and stability, political modernization including democracy and human rights, economic development, and access to natural resources and the Panama Canal.

(b) Theater Objectives.

1. Strengthen democratic institutions.
2. Eliminate threats to regional security.

3. Support continued economic and social progress.
4. Assist host nations to defeat narco-trafficking.
5. Ensure open and neutral Panama canal.
6. Enhance military professionalism.

c. Alliance or Coalition Components. The United States has entered into several agreements in Central America.

(1) Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. This was the first postwar American alliance. Better known as the Rio Pact, it established the Organization of American States. The pact is a regional collective security agreement designed to protect the American nations against all aggressors (internal or external to the hemisphere). Although used to legitimize the American intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965, the pact was not intended to be anticommunist or anti-dictatorial. (3:503) Over the years the role of the organization has expanded. Today the OAS is composed of the General Assembly, the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, and the Inter-American Council for Education, Science, and Culture. The OAS is also the umbrella body for other organs such as the Conference of American Armies.

(2) The Panama Canal Treaties. December 31, 1999 is a key date in the Panama Canal Treaty process. On that date the US will cease to be responsible for the canal's operation. The United States' responsibility for defense of the canal and its right to station forces and maintain bases will also expire on

that date.

(3) Honduras. A key agreement has allowed us to maintain a sizable logistic and support apparatus (Joint Task Force-Bravo) in Honduras. Additionally, we conduct frequent security assistance efforts and military-executed humanitarian, civic-action projects. We conduct joint exercises in Honduras and have a large Deployment-for-Training (DFT) program in which numerous active and reserve forces deploy to conduct training. This serves to prepare our forces while simultaneously demonstrating our forward presence and our ability to project power.

(4) Mexico. Probably the most important military agreement that we have with Mexico is one which completely demilitarizes the common border. This agreement has negative implications for the stationing of forces near the border for the purpose of interdicting drug traffic or illegal immigration.

2. Theater Strategic Situation.

a. Intelligence Estimate

1. There is no nation state in the region that can be considered an enemy of the United States. All have reasonably good relations with us, and no nation has a policy totally hostile to our interests. The fortunes of most of the nations in the region are economically linked to the United States to one degree or another either directly or indirectly. Trade between the region and the United States is vital to their interests and helpful to ours. It is increasingly growing vital to our interests, especially with respect to Mexico. However, most of

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such as heroin. The drug trade has developed into a cult-like organization and threatens the country not only with illegal activity and corruption but also with the loss of values destroyed by the cult mentality. Third, the Mexican population is becoming a consumer of narcotics, greatly diminishing the nation's productivity.

b. Guatemala. Several leftist guerrilla groups continue to challenge Guatemala's fragile democracy (Organizacion Revolucionario de Pueblo en Armas or ORPA, Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajadores or PGT, Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes or FAR, Ejercito Guerrillero de Pobres or EGP), however, their numbers have been greatly depleted recently due to a combination of the failure of legitimacy of the concept of communism and continual pressure from the Guatemalan Army. The Guatemalan Army is by far the most disciplined and best trained in the region. Given their history of intervention in governmental control of the nation, they must continue to be viewed as a potential threat to the orderly succession of civil rule. On the other hand, the Army has steered clear of political intervention since 1986 when the new constitution went into effect and Cerezo was elected President. Additionally, since the 1954 coup, the first change of one democratically elected government to another has recently taken place. The Army has taken great pains to improve its image both internally and externally with the United States. The attitude of the *Estado Mayor* seems to project a clean-cut, dedicated, and obedient army. Still at issue with the United States is the resolution of the Mike Devine case. The United States continues to pursue the case seeking conviction of some officer higher up

in the chain than those the Guatemalans have been willing to prosecute. Basically, we have withheld military and other aid pending a satisfactory resolution. Probably, the United States has gained about as much mileage out of the Mike Devine issue as it can, and now it is viewed as whining. The Guatemalan Army prides itself in being able to sustain itself without aid from the United States. It continues to seek and gain support from factions not necessarily aligned with our ideology. Most notably, the Israelis and the Taiwanese have a close military association. For example the standard individual weapon is the Israeli Galil, and Guatemala's psychological operations doctrine is taken from the Taiwanese model. This implies that the Army's basic doctrine is oriented on a population control model that may be obsolete today.

As with Mexico Guatemala has problems with narco-trafficking. The numerous airstrips on the southern coast provide ideal transshipment points for cocaine destined for the United States. Additionally, Guatemala produces a significant amount of poppy and heroin. These factors provoke the same type of threats to Guatemala as to Mexico. Additionally, Narco-traffickers are buying land and businesses in Guatemala, threatening the integrity of the country. Another problem is that guerrilla organizations, having lost much of their backing from Cuba and the Sandinistas, are beginning to combine forces with the drug producers.

c. El Salvador. With the imposition of a peace agreement between the government and the FMLN, hopes for long-

term tranquility and stability are high. Indeed, the population seems much more relaxed and unrestrained than ever before. Key to stability is a continuous peace based on long-term confidence on both sides. The critical element in this confidence is adherence to the demobilization plan by both the government forces and the FMLN. Already, there are suspicions that the FMLN is violating the agreement. They have been suspected of demobilizing meaningless forces consisting of untrained old and sick armed with obsolete weapons. They are believed to have cached their better weapons and equipment and to have kept their elite forces intact. Similar charges have been leveled against government forces.

Raised expectations coupled with the tremendous pressure of a large population living in a small area could stress the fragile democracy to the limit. The FMLN will continue their struggle, albeit through legitimate means such as elections. Any electoral successes they may encounter could precipitate a right wing backlash, and the spiral of civil war could start again.

El Salvador has not experienced the narco-trafficking problems that beset other regional countries, due mainly to the preoccupation with its civil war. Given that the country has achieved peace and given that economic conditions in the country are austere, it is reasonable to assume that El Salvador will develop some of the drug-related problems of other countries.

d. Nicaragua. President Chamorro's victory over Daniel Ortega gave us great hope for a democratic and cooperative

government in securing a peace in Central America. Indeed most of the Contras have been disarmed and repatriated, although a significant force remains armed much as the hard-core of the FMLN remains in El Salvador. On the other side, the Sandinista Army is by no means under the control of President Chamorro, leaving an extremely dangerous and unstable situation. It is not difficult to visualize the Army's takeover of the government, although with a somewhat different ideology than before. Another threat to democracy is the legacy left by Tomas Borge, the former Minister of the Interior. The intelligence apparatus he created to control the population was thought to be a highly covert organization and probably has a significant element that has gone or will go underground, remaining ready to create an insurgency or to carry out extortion and blackmail with their detailed knowledge of the lives and habits of many influential citizens including government officials.

b. Characteristics of the Region. The region is characterized by a somewhat diverse population consisting primarily of mestizos. Native Indians are prominent in some countries, but especially so in Guatemala. People of European, African, and Asian extraction make up a smaller but notable segment of the population. Populations vary from 86 million in Mexico to less than 200 thousand in Belize. The population of El Salvador is especially dense. That tiny country has about 5.7 million people occupying an area similar in size to Massachusetts. The standard of living is very low throughout the region, and unemployment is extremely high.

In general the area lacks an abundance of natural resources. Mexico is the notable exception, with a large reserve of oil and substantial amounts of metals, natural gas and timber. Guatemala has some petroleum reserves. Much of the economic base is in the agricultural sector, with smatterings of light industry and textiles. Mexico's industrial sector is much greater than that of the rest of the region.

The Pan American Highway is a good, reliable all weather road that extends from the US boarder with Mexico to Panama City. Its state of repair should be good throughout the region with the notable exception of Nicaragua. Still one can travel over land without much problem from Panama to the United States. There is no reliable road that connects Panama with Colombia.

No regional rail transportation system exists. Some local rail lines exist in various countries, however their practical use is generally restricted to hauling agricultural harvest from the interior. Stakebed trucks are by far the most common means of transporting commerce. Most countries have poorly developed lines of communication due to the extremely rugged nature of the terrain and a lack of capital investment.

3. Strategic Concepts.

a. Military Dimensions

(1) Nuclear, chemical, and biological. While no known NBC threat exists in the region, we will continue to be fully prepared to carry out operations under any conditions.

(2) Space. Our use of space assets for intelligence gathering, communications, and weather prediction will continue to be critical. Today, commercial space assets, especially communications and weather resources, are available to every country in the region. Furthermore, these assets are also often available to non-governments such as terrorists and narco-traffickers.

(3) Conventional. Sufficient land, air, and sea forces are trained, equipped, and available to accommodate execution of our regional goals. However, the employment of these forces to carry out our objectives is complicated by the numerous political, economic, and social issues which dominate the region.

(4) Low-intensity conflict. Our near-term objectives in Mexico and Central America will cause us to increase our efforts to deny narco-traffickers the ability to use the region for the transshipment of illicit drugs. Concurrently, we will continue to assist armed forces in the region in their professional development. We will assist friendly democratic governments in resisting and defeating insurgencies. Nation building will continue to be a cornerstone of our efforts. We will continue to promote national and regional peace and security.

(5) Logistic. Our ability to sustain forces in the region remains good. We have extensive bases in Panama and sufficient facilities in Honduras to sustain both air and sea lift. However, we will lose our bases in Panama at the turn of the century, and the feasibility of keeping open our rights in Honduras over the long term are in doubt. We will begin to depend more on the ability of CONUS based forces to deploy to the region. In such a case these forces would have to be capable of making a forced entry.

(6) Security assistance. Security assistance for all of Latin America amounts to only about four percent of our worldwide total. Of that amount only about fifty percent or slightly over \$100 million dollars goes to Central America. To an extent this small amount of assistance is offset by our forward presence and our demonstrated ability to project power into the region.

(7) Host-nation support. The prospects for host-nation support in the region is mixed. On the one hand, offers of assistance are usually enthusiastic and sincere, and for small-scale military operations of short duration, the available host-nation support is usually adequate. However, for any large operation, especially one sustained over a significant period of time, local resources will be sorely taxed, creating two drawbacks. Although any US consumption of host-nation resources will be a source of revenue and a boon to the local economy, we may consume scarce resources normally available to domestic industry at its peril. Second, local resources may be rapidly

depleted since the requirements for a large force are often greater than the local infrastructure can produce. Unskilled labor support, however, should be plentiful.

b. Diplomatic Dimensions. The United States will continue to enjoy fairly good diplomatic relations with most countries. We frequently use diplomatic pressures combined with security assistance and other forms of aid in a carrot-and-stick approach to dealing with Central American governments. We increasingly are using this approach in dealing with human rights violations, especially in El Salvador and Guatemala. Additionally, our diplomatic efforts in El Salvador bolstered by pressure on both the guerrillas and the government coupled with the fall of Communism in Europe have led to fruitful negotiations with the insurgents. We will have to monitor carefully the fragile cease fire and demobilization and keep up the diplomatic pressure.

c. Economic dimensions. The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) was conceived as a large-scale aid project in the form of investment, trade arrangements and financial measures (such as tax incentives). Developed under the early Reagan administration in 1981, it was initially a US program, but later was joined by Mexico, Canada, and Venezuela. The Bush administration has continued to encourage economic development. The "Enterprise for the Americas Initiative" attempts to achieve hemispheric prosperity through reduced debt burdens, increased investment, and expanded trade.

4. Specific Courses of Action.

a. Enemy Courses of Action. In this estimate I will not discuss and analyze the threat courses of action for every conceivable factor. To do so would expand the scope of the estimate beyond its intended length and would involve classified information. Instead I will discuss some of the probable courses of action for some of the key threat factors.

1. Narco-traffickers will most likely continue to control and benefit from the production, distribution, and sale of cocaine and other drugs.

a) They will continue to modernize and improve every aspect of their operations including command, control, communications, transportation, logistics, defense, deception, camouflage, and concealment. They will remain resilient, and seek every opportunity to adapt to and overcome any successes any counter-trafficking force incurs.

b) They will attempt to widen the market for cocaine so that Central America is no longer just a transshipment location but also an end point for distribution. Using cocaine to pay off the personnel in Central America who support them, narco-traffickers will ensure the distribution and sale of the drug within the region and will create a stable long-term market. As a result of the sale and distribution of cocaine within the region, the level of corruption will rise, giving way to a decrease in the effectiveness of anti-trafficking forces.

c) They will continue to develop the capability to produce and distribute marijuana and drugs produced from the poppy plant. They will attempt to militarize growing regions for

the marijuana and poppy, protecting their investments themselves or where feasible paying insurgents to provide protection.

d) Finally, they will invest some of their profits in order to buy land and businesses in the region.

2. FMLN in El Salvador. The FMLN having been greatly frustrated in the field by the Armed Forces of El Salvador and having lost much of their legitimacy with the population as a leader in the fight to solve the country's problems, has accepted a negotiated settlement. This requires them to disband all of their units and turn in all of their weapons. So far they have a poor record in meeting the agreed upon schedule.

a) The FMLN will continue to pursue their political objectives, attempting to gain parliamentary seats and executive and judicial office through legitimate means. They will use their well developed psychological operations capabilities in a long-term effort to sway the public to their side. Additionally, they will focus on infiltrating and eventually controlling labor groups, cooperative associations, and other organizations that can be used to their benefit.

b) In the short term, the FMLN will disband mostly only elements which were on paper but which were never capable of carrying out combat operations. The rosters of these units generally consist of men too old to fight and children. They will probably eventually disband their combat forces in the formal sense, but they will still cloister much of their equipment and weapons, and maintain some kind of overt association with all of their soldiers and a clandestine and

highly-organized association with selected leaders. Not only will this give them the capability to rearm relatively quickly should they feel the need to do so, but also, if it is carefully handled for the psychological effect, it will tend to give them certain political advantages against the incumbent government. The mere perception that the FMLN have retained a small but significant degree of combat capability is sufficient to give them enormous psychological powers within a nation that will be very unwilling to return to the violence of the past twelve years. Whether they intend to actually use any force or not may be immaterial, but they will continue to foster the perception that they are capable of doing so. One way to do this will be to allow selected caches of arms and equipment to be discovered from time to time, again with good psychological preparation and timing. Another method would be to stand up a combat element for a short time as a show of force.

b. Own Courses of Action.

1) There are several frames of reference from which to describe and analyze specific friendly courses of action. One would be to state them in terms of each specific task to be done, creating several courses of action for each task or mission, and then analyzing them according to some criteria or measure of merit in order to determine which ones would best get the job done. This, of course, would involve hundreds of possible outcomes. Another frame from which to describe the courses of action would be one which looked at the degree of effort as the principal difference among them. Each course of action would then be analyzed to determine how well it addresses the threat

courses of action in terms of a set of given criteria. The latter frame of reference will be used in this estimate.

2) The criteria for analysis must address both the mission-specific factors and any general factors deemed significantly relevant to the issue. Normally, mission-specific factors are determined as the result of a detailed mission analysis. In this case, the mission specific factors include all of the CINC's theater objectives plus a determination of overall effectiveness. Thus the mission-specific criteria are: Strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate threats to regional security, support continued economic and social progress, assist host nations to defeat narco-trafficking, ensure an open and neutral Panama Canal. The general factors to be used examine the major components we normally apply in forming our national strategy. The general factors to be used will be the following: economic supportability, political supportability, and military supportability. Mission-specific factors are normally prioritized and weighted higher than the general factors. Whenever a factor becomes unfeasible, it should be eliminated or restated where possible in order to correct its deficient aspects.

3) *Course of Action 1, (CA1), "Minimum Effort"* Southern Command carries out minimum peacetime engagement activities and military operations in conjunction with other U. S. government agencies in theater of operations. Emphasis is on minimizing military operations, support, and security assistance. Military assets will defer the lead to other U. S. agencies and

will support only when specifically requested. Host nations will be encouraged to take a greater role in accomplishing the CINC's objectives through the application of political and economic pressure. Direct military-to-military relationships between the U.S. and the host nations will be reduced, and all but the most routine military coordination will go through the respective civilian governments. Only minimum military assets will remain forward deployed.

It must be noted that this course of action is not meant to describe a situation in which the military does nothing. Rather it describes a situation in which the military takes a much-reduced role in the theater. This proposal is seriously considered to be the correct one by many influential Americans.

a) Analysis of Course of Action 1 begins with a look at how it effects the strengthening of democratic institutions. Because of its low key nature this option does little to strengthen democracy anywhere. At best it is neutral. It can only promote democracy by the small amount of professional military contact with members of the U.S. armed forces. In general the more the professional contact, the greater chance we would have of influencing host nation military in democratic traditions. This course of action would not accommodate such U.S. activity.

c) Likewise this course of action does little to help eliminate threats to regional security or to assist host nations in defeat narco-trafficking. It leaves the responsibility of equipping, training, and guiding counter-narcotics forces to the host nations themselves, something they

do not have the skills to do; nor can they afford the economic cost. Neither does this option allow for much U.S. technical support in the way of intelligence gathering and communications capabilities. We cannot expect other countries to fight a drug war which they see as our problem if we do not actively participate ourselves.

d) The U.S. military has done much in the past to support social and economic progress in Latin America. Major road building projects are on-going in Honduras and other humanitarian, civic-action activities are routinely carried out in Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. These project are often in conjunction with training activities of U.S. forces so the cost is much reduced. This course of action would effectively eliminate these beneficial activities.

e) This course of action is easily militarily and economically supportable because to do little cost little. It may be less politically supportable because there is a rising emphasis in the United States on taking positive action against narco-trafficking.

4) *Course of Action 2 (CA2), "Economy-of-Force"* .
Southern Command carries out required peacetime engagement activities and military operations in conjunction with host nation resources and with other U.S. government agencies in theater of operations. Emphasis is on tailoring military operations, support, and security assistance to carry out the CINC's objectives. This course of action should be proactive and executed in an aggressive manner. The military may be the lead

agency in selected activities and will have direct communications with host nation military and government. The host nation will remain the centerpiece for execution while the role of U.S. armed forces is primarily a supporting one. Priority of effort, then, is to prepare and support host nations to carry out necessary operations. Resources requirements are carefully calculated and matched to specific threats. Where feasible, economy of force actions are performed in one area in order to mass the required resources to be applied in another area.

a) Course of Action 2 does much to strengthen democratic institutions within countries in the region. It brings into play military-to-military relationships between the United States and the other nations of the region. Without a doubt the presence of the U.S. Operational and Training (OPAT) teams at each brigade and military zone has had an extremely positive moderating effect upon the El Salvador Armed Forces and made possible the negotiated settlement. Additionally, the U.S. military is well respected by the FMLN, who, to a large degree, agreed to enter into negotiations due to U.S. military influence, and who were persuaded to accept the peace accord under influence of the U.S. military. Both the Armed Forces of El Salvador and the FMLN desire that the OPATs remain in place. This respect for the integrity of the U.S. Armed Forces is equally prevalent throughout the rest of the region, but only through frequent contact will we be able to impart this theme over the long haul.

b) CA2 will help to reduce the narco-traffickers' control over production, distribution, and sale of illegal drugs

in the region. Furthermore it will make it much more difficult for them to widen their transshipment locations and markets in Central America. U.S. land, air, and sea forces will be in a position to support host nation forces. U.S. Special Operations Forces will be especially useful in providing support since they are specifically trained to assist in counternarcotics operations, counterinsurgency operations, psychological operations, intelligence operations, and civic-action operations. Host nations will be much better prepared to carry out counter-narcotics operations if they are well trained and equipped and are given good intelligence and communications links. In this CA U.S. forces provide training, and logistical support but do not come actively involved in the conduct of operations. CA2, while helping host nations to deal with the narco-trafficking problem, will fall far short of causing the defeat of the drug trade in the region. It does not provide sufficient military resources to be decisive. It will, at times, frustrate the traffickers, but rather than cause their downfall, will cause them to develop countermeasures and to become more clandestine and difficult to expose.

c) The course of action will make use of military resources to assist in stabilizing social and economic progress in the region. Already, we have substantial military run humanitarian/civic-action projects going on in Latin America. The Deployment for Training (DFT) program is widely used for this purpose. In this program units deploy to Latin America for training. Normally, they spend significant time on humanitarian

projects while deployed. Some DFTs are designed specifically for carrying out such projects. For example, we have kept a constant rotation of Army National Guard and Army Reserve engineer units in Honduras building a major highway, which when completed will provide a considerable improvement on that country's infrastructure. Special Forces units often provide medical and engineer assistance to remote areas. Equally important, we can train host nation forces to carry out nation building projects. This has the double effect of improving the standard of living of the people while giving them faith in their government.

d) Course of Action 2 is supportable militarily, economically, and politically since it is basically what we are doing now. With the cutback in U.S. military forces and with decreasing budgets this may change in the future.

5) *Course of Action 3, (CA3), "Total Effort".* Southern Command commits maximum possible resources in order to carry out peacetime engagement activities and military operations in conjunction with host nation resources and with other U.S. government agencies in theater of operations. Emphasis is on ensuring adequate resources are always available to carry out military operations, support efforts, and security assistance to accomplish the CINC's objectives. This course of action is also proactive and pursued in an aggressive manner. The military actively seeks the lead in determining programs where appropriate and in establishing communications with host nation government and military. The military will be expected to offer solutions and to take a more active role in assisting host nations.

Additionally, U.S. military will become much more involved in the planning of host nation operations and in accompanying host nation forces as advisers during operations. Although the priority of effort is still to prepare and support host nations to carry out necessary operations, U.S. military will be prepared to take over the host nations role if necessary.

a) Course of Action 3's major strength is that it puts overwhelming resources into carrying out counternarcotics measures. It proactively provides decisive force to meet the threat. It does not rely on economy-of-force operations in order to be able to mass sufficient force in a localized sector, rather it provides overwhelming resources over a wide front simultaneously, bringing pressure everywhere and keeping the narco-traffickers off guard. It requires strong land, sea, and air commitment and involves U.S. military actively gathering and disseminating intelligence, planning host nation counternarcotics operations, and accompanying host nation forces as advisors on raids and reconnaissance operations. Additionally, U.S. technical assets are proactively brought to bear against the threat. In this option resources are not committed in a piecemeal manner, rather the aim is to employ sufficient forces to ensure the job is done the first time.

b) CA3 ensures that the CINC's number one objective is accomplished, that of assisting host nations in defeating narco-trafficking. However, this course of action is not without risk since it may jeopardize efforts to preserve democratic institutions. The potential payoff for success is

high but the negative consequences should the course of action fail are also high.

c. Comparison. (see chart "Courses of Action Comparison")

The CINC's objectives like most of U.S. foreign policy is carefully worded to carry a message supportive of and taking into account the realities of the political process. As such some of the stated objectives are inadequate to get the job done. In particular the CINC's number one priority , "to assist host nations to defeat narco-trafficking" is noble and obtainable but it doesn't get the job done. The right objective is "to defeat narco-trafficking". Course of Action 2 is adequate to accomplish this objective as stated, but assisting to defeat is a long way from defeating. The ratings in the chart are given only to bring out the major relative strengths of the CAs and cannot be viewed as absolutes. Still it becomes obvious from the discussion in the preceding section that CA2 has major advantages and less risk than the others, save the fact that it is incapable of defeating narco-trafficking.

5. Recommendation. Execute Course of Action 2. Prepare plans to execute the counternarcotics portions of Course of Action 3. When politically supportable, execute Course of Action 3.

Courses of Action Comparison

MISSION-SPECIFIC FACTORS		C/A 1	C/A 2	C/A 3
Strengthen Democratic Institutions		L	G	M
Elim Threats to Regional Security		L	G	G
Support Econ and Social Progress		L	G	M
Assist HN to defeat Narco-traffick		L	M	G
Ensure Open/Neutral Panama Canal		M	M	M
Enhance Military Professionalism		L	G	M
Overall Effectiveness		L	G/M *	M/G **
GENERAL FACTORS				
Militarily Supportable		YES	YES	YES
Economically Supportable		YES	YES	YES
Politically Supportable		YES	YES	NO

L=Little degree, M=Moderate degree, G=Great degree

* CA1 is greatly effective except for defeating narco-trafficking

** CA2 is moderately effective except highly effective against narco-trafficking

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